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Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Miss. Baptists set hurricane response

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers, including almost two dozen Mississippi Baptist workers, have prepared nearly 30,000 meals for victims of Hurricane Dennis and dispatched numerous chainsaw teams to help clean up damaged areas of Alabama and Florida.

Don Gann, consultant in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which manages the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force, said the Task Force's Mass Feeding Unit was mobilized on July 12 and sent to Grove Hill, Al., to prepare hot meals for hurricane victims.

Disaster relief units and volunteers from the Oklahoma, Tennessee and Alabama conventions responded to Alabama along with the Mississippi unit. Disaster relief units and volunteers from the Georgia and Florida conventions responded to Florida needs along with the Mississippi unit.

Gann said chainsaw crews from Rankin Association in Brandon and Yalobusha Association in Water Valley were also activated to clear debris in three areas: Atmore and Flomoton in Alabama, and Century, Fl.

The volunteers returned to Mississippi on July 15. In all, 800 volunteers served in Alabama and Florida following Dennis, Henderson said.

As many disaster relief services were winding down following Dennis, the American Red Cross has requested that Southern Baptist disaster relief officials prepare to deploy mobile kitchens

units for Hurricane Emily, which is expected to strike southern Texas late this week.

"We've been asked to bring 10 to 12 feeding units to serve in the Brownsville and Corpus Christi area," said Terry Henderson, Southern Baptist national disaster relief director from the North American Mission Board's disaster relief operations center near Atlanta.

"We're in the process of gearing up for this operation now," he said. "They're predicting it will be a Category Four hurricane... The big concern in Texas is flooding and citizens from Mexico who will come across the border for food."

"We're starting to scale back in Florida. The projection is that one Georgia feeding kitchen will need to remain in through (this) week," Henderson said. "Also, Florida and Georgia have chainsaw crews working through (this) week in the Florida Panhandle near Milton."



ON ITS WAY — Ronnie Ferrell (on forklift), a member of Eastside Church, Belzoni, and on-scene coordinator of the Baptist Disaster Relief Task Forces response to Hurricane Dennis, talks with an unidentified American Red Cross volunteer on July 13 in Grove Hill, Alabama, while Tim Kyle (in rear of vehicle), a member of First Church, Kosciusko, loads the noon meal prepared by Task Force volunteers for victims of Hurricane Dennis. The Task Force regularly works with organizations such as the Red Cross to ensure that food provided by Mississippi Baptists is distributed to disaster victims. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Typically, when power is restored and restaurants in an affected area reopen, the American Red Cross starts curtailing services, Henderson said. "There's obviously lots of damage, but it's not as massive as what was wrought by Hurricane Ivan, unless of course your house was hit."

Henderson said this is one of the earliest hurricane responses on record for Southern Baptist disaster relief. The peak of the hur-

ricane season is considered to be between August and October. "Now we have one coming right behind [Dennis]. Potentially, this could stretch our volunteer and disaster relief resources if the season were to extend into November," he said.

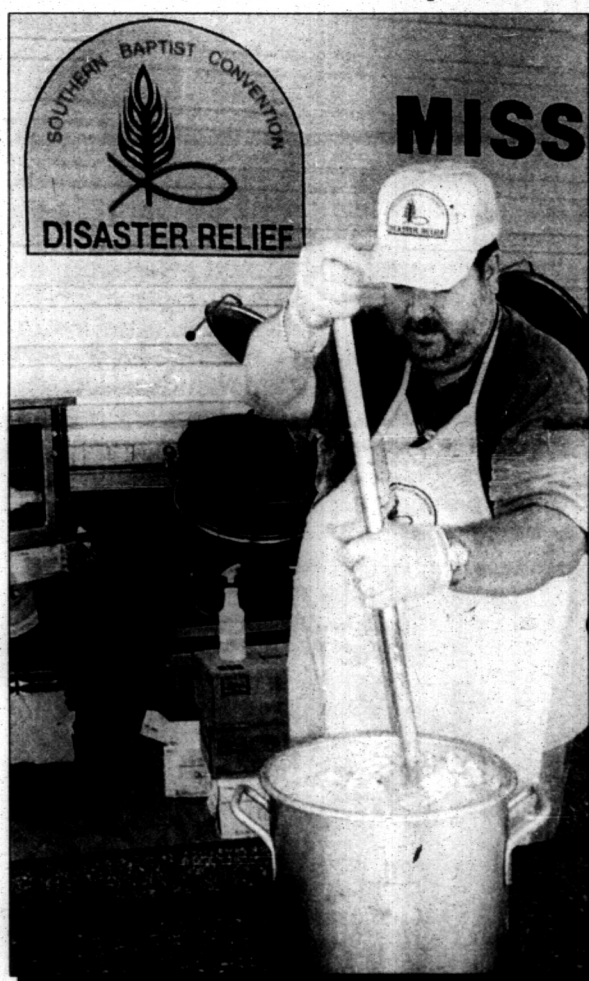
The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force's Mass Feeding Unit is a fully self-contained tractor-trailer that can prepare more than 10,000 meals per day. In addition, the Task Force can provide such services as debris removal, cleanup, "mud-out," and child care.

For frequent updates on the work of the Task Force, go to www.mbc.org.

The Task Force is supported by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering, and administratively by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

For more information on volunteering for the Task Force or to make a tax-free contribution to the Mississippi Baptist disaster relief effort, contact the Men's Ministry Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: dvail@mbcb.org.

William H. Perkins Jr. contributed to this article.



JUST RIGHT — Vernon Botel, a member of Briar Hill Church, Florence, tests a batch of chicken and dumplings on July 13 in Grove Hill, Alabama, at the site of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Forces activation to assist the victims of Hurricane Dennis in the Grove Hill area. The chicken and dumplings were served to disaster victims as part of that day's noon meal. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



HEADED HOME — Victims of Hurricane Dennis in Grove Hill, Alabama, depart with meals from the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force's feeding line on July 13, days after Hurricane Dennis created significant damage through the area. The Task Force was activated as a result of widespread needs in southwestern Alabama. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



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Bombing for Christ?

Eric Robert Rudolph heard the first part of his sentence in federal court earlier this week for the multiple murders and mayhem he claimed he committed in the name of Christ.

Rudolph, who pleaded guilty to the 1998 bombing of an abortion clinic in Birmingham that took the life of a police officer and maimed a clinic nurse for life, received two life sentences without parole. In late August, Rudolph will be sentenced in Atlanta after pleading guilty to the bombing of the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta in which two people died, and for several other bombings in the Atlanta area.

In addition to the three deaths, more than 100 people were injured in Rudolph's string of bombings. His guilty pleas allowed him to dodge the death penalty.

A ninth-grade dropout who was dishonorably discharged from the U.S. Army, Rudolph was introduced to the Christian Identity movement as a young child. The Christian Identity movement is a violent white-supremacist, anti-Semitic movement whose members believe government has lost all legitimate

authority because of leniency on such issues as abortion, homosexuality, and civil rights.

According to news media reports, Rudolph fell under the influence of the late Nord Davis Jr., the charismatic leader of a small Christian Identity sect in North Carolina who once told a reporter, "If you are an enemy of God, I am obliged to kill you."

Rudolph at some point in early adulthood apparently began to mix his Christian Identity, anti-government views with his hatred of abortion and homosexuality. In a rambling statement released after a court hearing in April in which he pled guilty to the charges against him, Rudolph wrote (excerpted):

The fact that I have entered an agreement with the government is purely a tactical choice on my part and in no way legitimates the moral authority of the government to judge this matter or impute my guilt.

Abortion is murder. And when the regime in Washington legalized, sanctioned and legitimized this practice, they forfeited their legitimacy and moral authority to govern....

There are those who would say to me that the system in Washington works. They say that the pro-life forces are making progress, that eventually Roe v. Wade will be overturned, that the culture of life will ultimately win over the majority of Americans and the horror of abortion will be outlawed. Yet, in the meantime thousands die everyday....

I ask these peaceful Christian law-abiding Pro-Life citizens, is there any point at which all of the legal remedies will not suffice and you would fight to end the massacre of children? How many decades have to pass, how many millions have to die?... I think that your inaction after three decades of slaughter is a sufficient answer to all of these questions.

Unfortunately, there are many individuals and groups in America today that would hijack the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a means to their own political ends. Is abortion a stench in the nostrils of God? Absolutely. Will America pay a heavy price for our disobedience and rebellion? Absolutely. Does our Lord and Savior call on us to plant hidden bombs that kill and injure the innocent along with the guilty, to advance His agenda? Absolutely not.

"THE RELIGION WE'RE LOOKING FOR IS LIKE THE CATHOLICS BUT WITHOUT ALL THE RITUALS, AND LIKE THE BAPTISTS BUT WITHOUT ALL THOSE DOCTRINES!"



Big eyes, bulging as if they might pop out of her head, stare blankly at the mud brick wall. The emaciated woman is so weak she can't even turn over by herself.

I sit among the pile of rags she lies on, her head in my lap, and try to offer some kind of comfort. I tell her of Jesus' love. She listens with tears in her eyes. Finally, she manages a throaty whisper:

"I have been so bad in my lifetime that God could never forgive me.... God will never forgive me."

I feel the hopelessness this woman expresses as she dies in my arms. I cry for the fate of my friend. She has become another African statistic for the world to lament.

World leaders gathered at the Group of Eight (G8) Summit in Scotland July 6-8 to discuss ways to aid poverty-strapped African countries. Chief among their ideas was a debt relief package totaling \$55 billion, plus a promised increase in annual aid to Africa to \$50 billion by 2010.

Debt relief is indeed the key for Africa. But canceling monetary debt alone is not the answer. The only true debt relief comes through Jesus Christ.

For years I've lived and covered stories in Africa. I've seen poverty, famine, disease, natural disasters and civil war. Every

GUEST OPINION:



Africa's only true debt relief

By Sue Sprenkle
International Mission Board

day, I'm confronted with the realities of starvation and impending death. Beggars line up at the window of my car asking for money to buy bread. I've sat talking with mothers as they fan flies from the eyes of listless, malnourished children with bloated bellies.

I've witnessed or personally experienced everything that the protesters outside the G8 meeting say they are fighting against. Sure, there are days when I want to retreat back into a "Western" mindset and throw money at poverty and disease. But I know that money will not solve the greatest need in Africa.

Africans need a sense of hope. I've interviewed witch-doctors, village chiefs, Muslim imams, pastors, CEOs, even presidents of various countries, and they are all searching for the same thing—the hope only Jesus Christ can give.

Great strides have been made in reaching Africa for Christ, but millions remain who have never heard the name of Jesus.

World leaders and aid activists want to bring food and education to the parts of Africa left behind by the rest of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa is in the World Bank's lowest gross national income category of less than \$765 per person per year. Africa already receives about a third of the total aid given by world governments, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Yet Africa is the only continent to have become poorer in the past 25 years. By the year 2000, half the world's poor were in Africa.

The Make Poverty History campaign, supported by many Christian evangelicals as well as rock stars and activists, urged G8 leaders to raise an

extra \$50 billion in aid. Where will the money go? Most likely for food, education and disease prevention — all vital needs.

I've been in the famine-stricken villages when grain is delivered. The women clap and celebrate, then sit solemnly waiting for what they believe is their right. Sometimes fights break out over who receives a red plastic plate and who doesn't.

Contrast that with the times I've been in a village when the Good News is introduced. When someone comes to Christ, their entire countenance changes. Celebration erupts. Often a goat is slaughtered and cooked (in African cultures, goats are worth a lot of money). There is dancing and singing well into the night. Celebrations can go on for days in thankfulness for this God-given gift.

They know it isn't something they deserved nor is it their right, yet God provided a way. Africans are truly humbled that their debt of sin has been paid in full by Jesus Christ.

Sprenkle, an International Mission Board correspondent for Africa based in Nairobi, Kenya, has written about the continent's struggles — and how Christians have responded — since 1999. Her commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Churches taking root amid war's ravages

IRAQI KURDISTAN (BP) — Beneath the rubble of news about bombings, hostage-taking and political wrangling in Iraq lies a more positive picture of fledgling evangelical churches, Compass Direct news service noted in a report during the July 8-10 weekend.

In the northeast, Iraqi Kurdistan offers a haven for Christian activity as the two rival Kurdish governments grow in their toleration of Muslims becoming Christians, Compass stated. In the south, the evangelical church is growing rapidly.

In Baghdad, a total of 15 evangelical congregations have started since the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, according to Compass. Officially, only two evangelical churches — both Presbyterian and led by Egyptian nationals — existed in the capital during Hussein's rule. Now there are Baptists, Methodists, and Christian and Missionary Alliance congregations, all led by local Iraqi pastors.

"The people are open like never before," Ghassan Thomas, pastor of a Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Baghdad, told Compass. "It is because we have no peace. This is how we connect our message to the nation: I preach on the topic, 'How do we get peace?' and everyone listens, especially when I talk about the deeper peace that Christ brings."

Most of the members of the new churches come from the Presbyterian church, and some come from historic Christian denominations such as the Chaldean Catholic or Syrian Orthodox, which have been in Iraq for centuries, Compass reported.



GOSPEL IN IRAQ—More than 200 people gather each week at the National Evangelical Baptist Church in Baghdad, which opened in January 2004. Reports indicate people are accepting Christ and being baptized each week at the first Baptist church ever established in Iraq, and other churches are now being planted. (BP photo)

"Muslims too want peace," Thomas said. "Many of them are frightened. When the hostages are killed, often a Koranic verse is used to justify it. So many Muslims are scared of their own God. When we preach that God is love, it is so liberating to them."

Compass noted that Southern Iraq is deemed too dangerous for foreign Christian workers, so most have pulled back to the more stable Iraqi Kurdistan. More than four million Kurds reside in this northern mountainous region, which has enjoyed autonomy since the first Gulf War in 1991.

Two Kurdish political factions control the area. Arbil is the main city of the domain of Massoud Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party, and Sulamaniya is the power center of newly elected Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

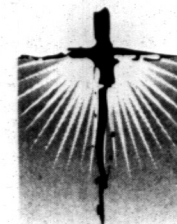
In both regions, Kurdish refugees are flooding back, Compass noted; there is little street crime and authorities have severely curtailed the activities of Islamic extremists. This has brought much prosperity to the area, which many believe is one reason the respective administrations — in their courting of Western investment — have markedly improved their defense of religious freedom.

Yousif Matty, a leading pastor of the Kurdish Evangelical Church, a denomination in the north comprising Kurdish and Arabic Christians, told Compass, "The last 10 years have been a golden time here, and it is set to continue with Talabani becoming president. He has been very strong on emphasizing the rule of law. Also, the Kurds have suffered at the hands of Islamists and have no love for them."

Congregations of the Kurdish Evangelical Church have a few hundred members, from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds. Matty runs four bookshops, two schools and other projects, and he received a \$500,000 plot of land from the government to build his church. The other evangelical denomination in the north is the Kurdish Language Evangelical Church, which is exclusively Kurdish-speaking and made up primarily of Kurds.

"There is always persecution from the family when a Muslim becomes a Christian," the Kurdish pastor of one fellowship in Arbil told Compass. "That will not change anytime soon, but it used to be that the new convert would face persecution from the state also, yet this is less true today."

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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

Record THE BAPTIST

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Barna: S.S. still great

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Barna Research Group has found that Sunday School is still one of the great mainstays of ministry, holding steady in a culture of theological transformation — and while the general concept of Sunday School remains in place in most churches, certain details surrounding its practice are evolving with the times. Barna found that 19 out of every 20 Protestant churches offer "a Sunday school in which people receive some form of planned or systematic Bible instruction in a class setting," and across denominations Sunday School remains one of the most widely embraced ministry programs. One change Barna noticed was that churches are increasingly less likely to offer classes for children under the age of five and for junior high and high school students, which researchers calculated as 20,000 fewer churches providing Sunday School for each age group. The most common Sunday School programming is offered for elementary age children and for adults, Barna found. Another emerging change in Sunday School is that congregations are moving toward "customized" curriculum, meaning they create their own. Southern Baptist churches are among those least likely to customize their material, with just four percent reporting such a practice. Barna also found that since 1997, there has been a 15% decline in the percentage of churches offering Vacation Bible School. Southern Baptists were among those most likely to continue the tradition, but other denominations are moving away from the program, citing a lack of teachers as the most common reason. While further examining educational programs beyond Sunday School in churches, Barna discovered a 10% drop in the proportion of churches that have midweek programming for children, representing 20,000 fewer churches providing such opportunities. Again, midweek programming for children was most common among Southern Baptists. For more information on the study released July 11, visit www.barna.org.

Looking back

10 years ago

Severe thunderstorms that dumped almost three-quarters of an inch of rain in the Jackson area force the cancellation of Youth Night '95 at open-air Mississippi Memorial Stadium, for the first time in the long-running history of the popular annual event.

20 years ago

A group of 29 volunteers from Harrisburg, Ingram, and Mt. Vernon Churches in the Tupelo area combine resources and work 12-hour days to completely erect Maple City Church in Goshen, Ind.

50 years ago

More than 30,000 persons — nearly one-tenth of the population of Norway's capitol — jam Ullevaal Stadium in Oslo for the opening rally of Billy Graham's Scandinavian crusade.



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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
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4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

WHAT IS A BAPTIST BUILDING?

Recently, one of our associational mission directors had a new worker in his office. After being at the association for a little while she asked the director, "What is a Baptist Building?" He was somewhat confused, and so she clarified her question by saying, "You are always talking about something or someone at the Baptist Building. What is that?" He realized that she was talking about the building in Jackson that houses the offices of directors, most of our consultants, and support staff for Baptist work across the state. He then began to describe to her the what, where, and who of the Baptist Building and she somewhat understood. His next step was to plan for her to come to Jackson to visit, meet, see, and connect with the people and all of the opportunities that flow out of the Baptist Building.

As he was telling me about the experience, I thought about all of the Baptists who have never visited the Baptist Building. They may wonder what it is, what it is for, and what happens here. Every day hundreds of calls come into the switchboard at the Baptist Building and many of the callers have no idea with what they are connecting. Before I give a brief sketch about what happens in and out of the Baptist Building, let me help clarify what the Baptist Building is not.

It is not the Baptist headquarters. Some people have referred to the Baptist Building as the headquarters, but it is not. Baptists never have had, do not now, and never will have a hierarchy in church government by which decisions are made and mandates are passed out or down to anybody. If Baptists have a headquarters, it is the local church or maybe even more specifically the heart of the individual believer where Jesus reigns as Lord. Even if decisions are made and directions are given from the Baptist Building, they come as a result of what they have been instructed to do by the church and the convention.

Another thing the Baptist Building is not is the seat of



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

church government. Baptists can be strange people for they fiercely hold to the autonomy of the local church and even the autonomy of the individual believer in what the Bible teaches that we are each a priest unto God. At the same time hardly a week or sometimes even a day goes by that a call does not come to someone at the Baptist Building wanting us to tell some individual believer, church, or association what they can and cannot do. If you want to find out how much governmental control one Baptist group has over another one, just try to exercise controlling them. Caring for each other is one thing, encouraging and influencing is something else, but controlling and dictating is not going to work with Baptists.

One other thing that the Baptist Building is not is a university or seminary that is teaching, telling, instructing, and directing what to believe and how the activities in individual churches are to be carried out. Frequently, a pastor will make some comment about a passage of Scripture or an interpretation about a doctrine, or maybe a minister of music will insert some new song into the worship service, and we will get a call at the Baptist Building saying, "What are you teaching those preachers or those ministers of music?"

We do provide conferences and seminars of worship experiences and opportunities for biblical training, but that does not mean that the direction that someone leads in a church came about because of our instruction. Many of our pastors and lay people are gifted and academically trained, but they still have the responsibility and the privilege of going before the Lord, listening to His Word, and thinking for themselves. At times that creates

an unusual dynamic and occasionally some points of stress.

So, what is the Baptist Building? **It is a point of reference.** Many of the visits and a large percentage of the incoming calls are pointed at this very issue. People are looking for information, materials, or help in understanding and dealing with an issue. Sometimes there are church issues, other religion issues, legal problems, questions related to missionaries, or a need for counseling or a crisis center. As many things as go on in people's lives from family to faith to finances to fun or failure, someone is very likely to pick up the phone and call to see if they can get some help. Are we always able to come through in fine fashion? Probably not, but even when we are unable to help we want to, and we do try. The Baptist Building is a point of reference related to Baptist work and organization, to missions and ministries, and for Christian discipleship or daily dilemmas. Oftentimes, when churches do not know where to turn, they turn to the Baptist Building and it becomes a point of reference.

Second, the Baptist Building is a place of resources. Sometimes when we have opportunity to give an overview of all of the things, people, and involvement that takes place out of the network of the Baptist Building resources, people are absolutely astounded. Literally, it covers the state and virtually every need that people may have both for materials and consultation, but far beyond that it reaches around the world. Resources for missions across America and missions on an international scale are a part of the work that takes place at the Baptist Building. The range of resources to help and encourage our churches and

members seems almost endless. You may need some help with choirs, children's ministry, collegiate ministry, youth ministry, men's ministry, women's ministry, mission involvement, stewardship, evangelism, church starts, conflict resolution, understanding the culture in which your church ministers, discipleship programs, or Sunday School support. The Baptist Building is a place of resources.

One other thing I would mention is that **the heart of the Baptist Building has nothing to do with the building but with the people.** The people who are a part of the team of servants exist to respond to the needs and dreams of the folks in our churches. The churches do not exist for the Convention, but the Convention exists for the churches. The staff of the Baptist Building is made up of very capable people but even more significant is the fact that they are caring men and women. If you call, write, or contact someone at the Baptist Building with a need, a dream, or a desire you should be met by a person who also desires to respond and help. Now for sure we can't do everything, fix everything, and we are not always able to respond in the way we would like to because of our own limitations of time, energy, wisdom, and resources, but we will do what we can to reach out and help to the best of our ability.

While it is true that the Baptist Building is a building, it is a building that houses people who want to serve the Lord and serve the Lord's people. Since we are people working with people, we need your prayers in order for us to do our best and honor the Lord. It is our joy to serve you and to serve with you. From now on when you think of the Baptist Building and pray for the Baptist Building, please don't think of some bricks and mortar, but think about people and ministries and pray that God will give us strength, courage, wisdom, and a right spirit to go on serving.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Mission Trip to Ukraine

1. **M. C. Johnson, Associational Missions Director, North Delta**, is shown with his translator, Egar Shepata, during a recent mission trip to several towns and villages in Ukraine. Johnson spent three months in Ukraine, preaching 39 times and teaching theology and church administration to pastors who were unable because of employment to get formal training.

2. **New Hebron Church, New Hebron**, recently celebrated Old Fashioned Day in preparation for their 100th

anniversary celebration Aug. 7, which will include a musical prelude at 10 a.m. with Roy Daughdrill and Christi Riley Chavis; worship at 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and the opening of the church cornerstone at 2 p.m. Jimmie Wood and J. B. Watkins, speaking; Sonny Adkins, pastor. For more information, call (601) 694-2243 or (601) 694-2229.

3. **Gore Springs Church, Grenada County**, is planning a 50th anniversary celebration Oct. 2. All members and former members are invited.



2. Old Fashioned Day, New Hebron Church, New Hebron

JUST FOR THE RECORD



4. McDaniel, Herbert Church, Neshoba Assn.



6. Children's Choir, Hillcrest Church, Byram



5. Baby Recognition, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale

4. Herbert Church, Neshoba Association, recognized Rado McDaniel for 30 years as deacon. Shown are McDaniel and pastor Mark McDonald.

5. Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, held a parent dedication/baby recognition ceremony June 17. Five families, shown, participated in the ceremony.

6. The 1st-6th grade children's choirs of Hillcrest Church, Byram, presented the musical Nic at Night by Kathy Hill for their end of the year program in May. Shown are the participants.

7. A group from Sunrise Church, Carthage, recently visited the agriculture museum in Jackson. Shown are the participants.

8. Kay Arthur Conference, First Church, Jackson, Friday, August 26 Precept Leader Day, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Aug. 27, "A Day with Kay," 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Register online now at www.precept.org or call (800) 763-8280 to reserve your place. Early bird pricing until August 8.



7. Ag Museum Trip, Sunrise Church, Carthage

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ministry. Send resumes to FBC Mt Olive, 3200 Mt. Olive Road, Mt. Olive, AL 35117, attn: children's minister search committee.

CHRISTIAN LONG DISTANCE, 3.9 cents interstate, 4.9 cents in state. No monthly service charge. Call (866) 587-8346 or www.lowermyphonebill.com/haroldtt.

CHURCH BUS FOR SALE, 1997 supreme 29 passenger, 14,000 miles. Must see, \$26,000. Hollandale Baptist Church, Mr. Paul Holland. Call (662) 822-7234.

CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, free estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone (601) 776-6617.

ASHLEY COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION of Crossett is accepting resumes for the position of associational missionary. This is a full-time position that consists of serving 25 churches in southeast Arkansas. Deadline for receiving resumes is August 31, 2005. Send resumes to search committee, Ashley Baptist Association, 1547 Hwy 52 W, Crossett, AR 71635, or email ashleybaptassoc@cei.net.

MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MADISON, MISS., is seeking a dynamic and passionate teacher of God's word to immediately fill the full-time position of minister of education. Please mail letters of interest with credentials to FBC Madison, P.O. Box 400, Madison, MS 39130-0400, or email Shari Hurt, pastoral secretary at shurt@fbcmadison.org.

SEEKING ORGANIZED, SELF-STARTER FOR FULL-TIME EDUCATION/YOUTH MINISTER. Ideal candidate has a God-filled spirit, passion for education and desires to lead a growing youth group. Two years college preferred, three years experience required. Send resumes, including references, by 8/5/05 to Liberty Baptist Church, search committee, 5199 Lakeland Drive, Flowood, MS 39232.

FULL-TIME MINISTER TO CHILDREN NEEDED: First Baptist Church, West Point, Miss. First time position will be responsible for working with newborns through six graders. Seminary degree with emphasis in childhood education preferred. Send resumes to FBC, children's minister search, P.O. Box 794, West Point, MS 39773.

MUSIC DIRECTOR WITH SOME ASSOCIATE PASTOR RESPONSIBILITIES. Full or part-time possible. Church is 6 miles north of Blue Mountain College. Send resume to Springdale Baptist Church, 581 East Walnut Street, Ripley, MS 38663.

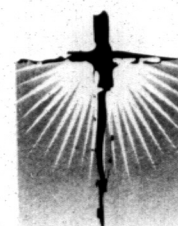
MINISTER OF YOUTH/CHILDREN: Dry Creek Baptist Church in Magee, Mississippi. Resumes being accepted for a bivocational minister of youth/children. Send resume to Dry Creek Baptist Church, 1246 Dry Creek Road, Magee, MS 39111.

YOUTH MINISTER: First Baptist Church, Nesbit, in DeSoto County, Mississippi, is accepting resumes for a youth minister. Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, Nesbit, c/o youth minister search committee, 1645 Hwy 51 N., Nesbit, MS 38651 or email to khopper@firstsecuritybk.com.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH in Hattiesburg, Miss. is currently seeking a Director of childhood ministry. Please send resumes with references to committee on childhood ministry, Calvary Baptist Church, 3139 Oak Grove Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

WEST CORINTH BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a pianist. Please contact the church office at (662) 286-6529, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday - Friday. Or call Joe Williams at (731) 645-8918 after 6 p.m.

FIRST CHURCH, GLUCKSTADT, Miss., seeking a worship leader for Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights only. Blended worship, free-flowing format. Contact Author Comans at (601) 209-6000 or email authorcomans@aol.com.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

MC planning new campus this fall

Mississippi College (MC) will open a North Campus this fall at Broadmoor Church in Madison. An information session has been set for July 26 at 6 p.m. on the second floor of Love Building at Broadmoor Church.

Four courses offered will be offered in eight-week sessions during the fall semester. All classes will be taught on Tuesday and Thursday evenings each week. The courses are:

- Fall I: Bible 120, Introduction to the New Testament, offered at 5:30 p.m. Management 371, Principles of Management & Organizational Behavior, offered at 7:50 p.m.

- Fall II: Marketing 381, Marketing, offered at 5:30 p.m. Bible 110, Introduction to the Old Testament, offered at 7:50 p.m.

For more information, call (601) 925-3979. MC is affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Easter production attendees, Sunrise Church, Carthage



2. Instrument Dedication Service, Sunrise Church, Carthage



3. New Handicap Van, Hope Church, Cedar Bluff



4. Senior Adult Choir, Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale

1. A group from **Sunrise Church, Carthage**, attended the Easter production at Bellevue Church, Memphis, Tenn. Shown are the participants.

2. **Sunrise Church, Carthage**, recently dedicated the church's new instruments. Shown, standing, are Graham Smith, Sherry Thornton, and Steve Turner; seated is Irene Martin.

3. **Hope Church, Cedar Bluff**, recently purchased a handicap-equipped van. Shown is Wanda Winter, in wheel-

chair, who received a special ride home. Barry Hathcock, pastor.

4. The senior adult choir of **Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale**, performed five numbers on the stage of the White House Dinner Theater, Branson, Missouri. Shown are the participants.

5. **Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association**, honored high school and college graduates with a reception and Bibles May 22. Shown are the honorees. Robert E. Walker, pastor.



5. Graduates, Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association

BIBLE DRILLERS



1. Bible Drillers, Raymond Road Church, Jackson

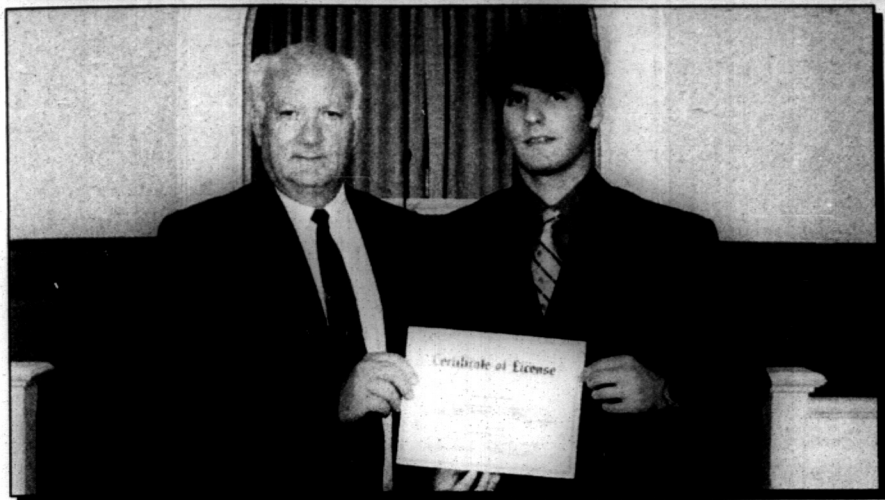


2. Bible Drillers, Liberty Church, Carroll Association

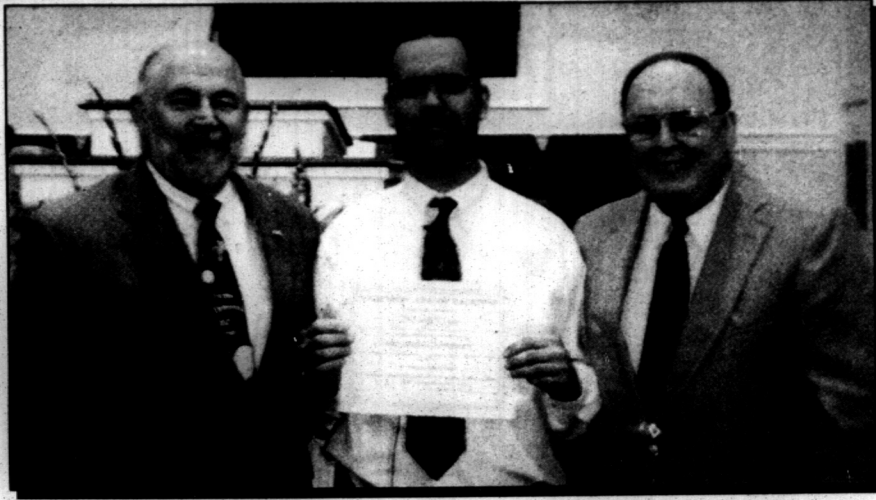
1. **Raymond Road Church, Jackson**, recognizes their Bible Drillers. Shown are Chris Prather, Emily Key, Somer Warren, J. W. Herring, Destanie Miller, and leaders Rene' Warren and DeAnna Blaylock.

2. **Liberty Church, Carroll Association**, recognized their Bible Drill participants. Shown are leader Jane Blair, Matthew Hamann, Raymond Gillon, and pastor Danny Swindle.

ORDINATIONS



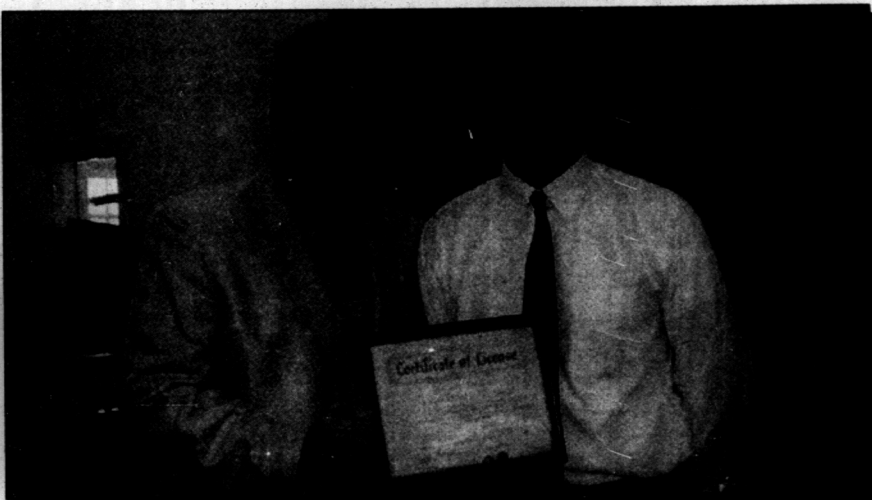
1. Licensing of Bryant, Pleasant Ridge Church, Chickasaw Assn.



2. Licensing of Sorey, Whitesand Church, Prentiss



3. Licensing of Black, Wake Forest Church, Sturgis



4. Licensing of Newell, Utica Church, Utica

1. Pleasant Ridge Church, Chickasaw Association, licensed Jonathan Bryant to the ministry July 12. Jonathan is the son of Danny Bryant, pastor and associational missions director, Chickasaw Association. Shown are the Bryants.

2. Timothy Ladd Sorey was licensed to the gospel ministry June 12 by Whitesand Church, Prentiss. Shown are Charles Burnham, pastor; Sorey; and Wesley Daughdrill.

3. Wake Forest Church, Sturgis, licensed Kevin Black to the ministry. Shown are Mark Coleson, Black, and Wade Stevens, pastor.

4. Utica Church, Utica, licensed Mark Newell, youth and children's minister, to the gospel ministry. Shown are pastor Ben James and Newell.

www.mbc.org

JUST FOR THE RECORD

6. Bellevue Church, Pontotoc Association, recently honored two deacons and their wives for more than 45 years of service each. Shown are Floyd and Eva Fay Gardner and Roy and Mary Phillips. Also in the service was church charter member Gladys Berry, shown.

Mayberry's Golden Rule, Aug. 20. Tickets are \$15. For information, call (601) 372-7812.

9. Johnson Station Church, Summit, is hosting a singing July 31, 1 p.m., featuring the Southern Plainsmen, Hornbeck, La.

7. The children's choir of Goss Church, Columbia, presented the musical Jailhouse Rock May 15. Shown are the choir members. Choir directors are Alicia Bass and Julie Robertson; Mark McArthur, pastor.

10. Carrollton Baptist Women's Conference, The Power of the Potter's Hands, will be held Sept. 10, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; speaker, Rita Sweatt; music, Paula Smith and North Carrollton Women of Praise. Also featured is the story of The Potter, told by Keith Carpenter. \$15. For more information, call (662) 237-9626 or (662) 453-0662.



6. Honoring Over 45 Years of Service, Bellevue Church, Pontotoc Association



7. Children's Choir, Goss Church, Columbia



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JUST FOR THE RECORD

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MPATEO, YAP OLIX NTFP,
XLBYA YAP ETWO RTO,
YALY B HBEE XPSO L
QLFBSP BS YAP ELDO, STY
L QLFBSP TQ MWPLO,
STW L YABWXY QTW
HLYPW, MZY TQ APLWBSR
YAP HTWOX TQ YAP
ETWO.

LFTX PBRAY: PEPGPS

Clue: O = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Sixteen: Two.

11. **Heritage Heights Church, Laurel**, recently held a baby bottle campaign to benefit the local Crisis Pregnancy Center. The church raised \$1,200.

12. The youth of **Mantee Church, Mantee**, recently attended Youth Week at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly. Shown are the attendees.

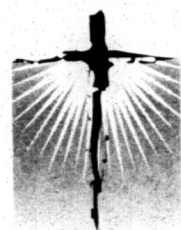
13. **Bethel Church, Louisville**, held a baby dedication May 22. Shown are the participants.

14. Blaine Wilder receives service awards for his missionary studies and projects in the RA group at **Barefoot Springs Church, Pelahatchie**. Shown is Kathy Hill, Wilder, and Ted Hawkins, pastor.

15. **Unity Church, Moselle**, is sponsoring the 5th annual St. Jude Wheels for Life Bike-a-thon and fund raiser Aug. 6, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., at the church. Festivities include gospel entertainment, a

car/truck/motorcycle show, catfish dinners, bakery, ice cream parlor, country store, dunk the deacon booth, auction, and door prizes.

16. **Bigbee Church, Monroe Association**, is hosting a 50th anniversary service for Truman Carter's service in the ministry July 31, 2 p.m., with a fellowship following. The church is asking any church in Mississippi where Carter served to send two representatives.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



11. Crisis Center Fundraiser, Heritage Heights Church, Laurel



12. Mantee Youth, Mantee Church, Mantee



14. RA Awards, Barefoot Springs Church, Pelahatchie



13. Baby Dedication, Bethel Church, Louisville

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Liberty Church, Liberty

New Hope Church, Sumrall, had an average attendance of 52 children and 36 teachers and helpers for their VBS. Two children were saved. The group also set a goal of a mile of pennies (84,480 or \$844.80), and exceeded it by collecting \$1,113.19, with the offering going to the Baptist Children's Village. VBS director was Angie Lucas; Charles Broome, pastor.

Mt. Vernon Church, Webster Association, held their VBS June 20-24. The students and teachers collected more than 100 cans of food for the association's food pantry.

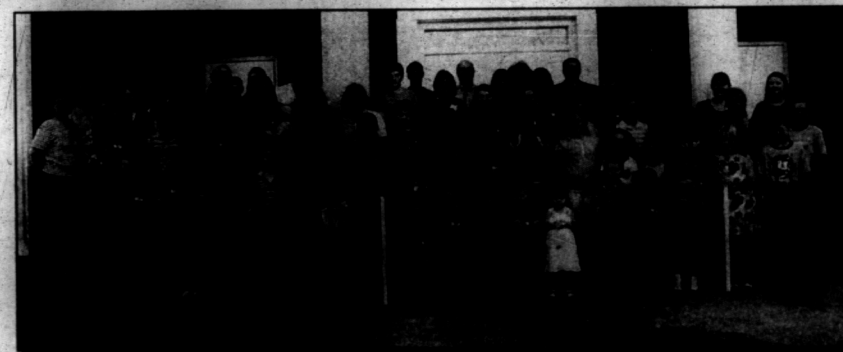
Kreole Ave., Moss Point: Jul. 18-22; 3 yr. old-6th grade; 6-9 p.m.

Thrasher Church, Booneville, held VBS June 13-16. Lori Johnson, VBS director; Laci McClung, music; Lynsol B. Richmond, pastor. Shown are the participants

Liberty Church, Liberty: June 6-10; One hundred seventy-six teachers and children, 3 years-6th grade enrolled with an average attendance of 144; mission offering received for the Natchez Children's Home. Shown are the participants.

New Hope Church, Foxworth, held their VBS June 13-17, with an enrollment of 52. Total offering was \$1,395.98.

Cairo Church, Ecu: VBS with 102 enrolled and an average attendance of 87; five professions of faith; Patricia Holcomb, director; William G. Dowdy, pastor.



Thrasher Church, Booneville



Mt. Vernon Church, Webster Assn.



Practical Principles for Christian Living



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 5

The Ten Commandments: Are They To Be or Not To Be?



By Lee Yancey

Supreme Court Cases:

McCreary County, Kentucky vs. ACLU (2005)

— involved a courthouse display that began by featuring only the Ten Commandments and then was changed to include other founding documents. The Supreme Court found that the display in Kentucky was a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Van Orden vs. Perry (2005) — involved a monument of the Commandments on the grounds between the Texas State Capitol and the Texas Supreme Court. The Supreme Court found that the monument did not violate that same constitutional clause. Four of the nine U.S. Supreme Court Justices found that the monument was passive and that its

dual significance for religion and government complied with constitutional requirements. A fifth justice, Justice Breyer, reasoned that because there had not been a challenge to the monument during its 40-year history it did not result in establishment of religion.

Lemon vs. Kurtzman (1971) — Since this decision, the Supreme Court has required a secular purpose for government action challenged under the Establishment Clause.

At the end of last month, the 27th of June, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down two decisions concerning the fates of two Ten Commandments Displays, one in Kentucky and the other in Texas. They ruled that one was unconstitutional and the other was allowable. The Court relied on the secular purpose requirement from **Lemon vs. Kurtzman** in **McCreary** but determined that it did not apply in **Van Orden**. The inconsistency of the Court leaves no viable standard to determine what is and what is not the establishment of religion. The Court implied that any new display of the Ten Commandments could be considered a violation of the First Amendment. Existing displays would be "grandfathered in" and fall under the secular purpose heading of **Lemon**.

The Supreme Court would benefit by looking at what the

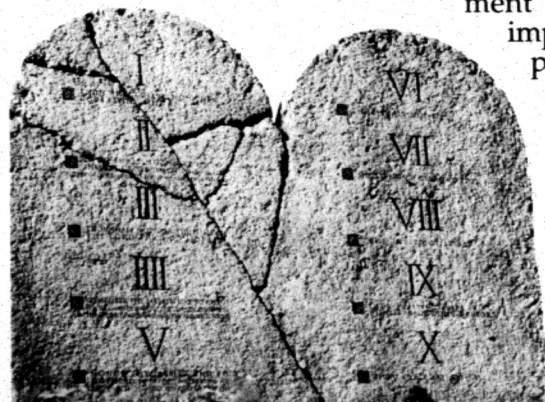
founders meant when they wrote that government could not establish religion. Thomas Jefferson, who made the phrase "separation of church and state" famous, approved church services to be held in the War Department and Treasury building; he ordered the Marine Corps Band to play in worship services at the U.S. Capitol; and he signed all documents "in the year of our Lord Christ." Since its inception, Congress has opened each day with prayer and has always rejected the idea that paid chaplains violated the first amendment. There is no possible way that our founding fathers would find the display of the Ten Commandments in a courthouse to be a government establishment of religion.

Religious symbols are located throughout Washington, D.C. Moses and the Ten Commandments are found in the Capitol, in the National Archives, in the U.S. Supreme Court, and in the Library of Congress. These representations have been accepted

throughout U.S. history without challenge. According to Justice Scalia, some in the Supreme Court are bent on ridding our government of all hints of religion. If they are successful, the result could look similar to secular France or Communist Cuba. The Court is trying to force religion into a closet saying it has no place in the public square.

Since the announcement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's retirement, there has been much speculation as to the views of the justice who takes her place on the highest court in the land. She has been the swing vote on many moral and social issues usually leaning to the left. Let us pray that President Bush will appoint Justices who will find the Law and rule accordingly, instead of participating in law-making themselves.

Dr. Lee Yancey is a consultant with the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at lyancey@christianaction.com.



REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Belden Church, Belden: Revival, Aug. 21-24, 7 p.m.; Jackie Kay, evangelist.

Bethel Church, Oxberry: Revival, July 31-Aug. 3; Sun., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Nunnelee, preaching; Larry Kilgore, music; Bessie Kilgore, pianist; William McDaniel, pastor.

Black Jack Church, Yazoo County: Revival, Jul. 31-Aug. 3; 7 p.m.; Chip Henderson, speaker; Larry Black, music; Betty Jean Patterson, accompanist. Louis Smith, pastor.

Calvary Church, Carroll County: Revival, Jul. 24-27, 7 p.m.; Sonny Redwine, guest speaker; Joey Ingram, music.

Clifton Church, Scott County: Revival, Jul. 24-29; Sun., 10:45 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; David Nelson, evangelist; Tal Vardamin, music; Tony Henry, pastor.

Evergreen Church, Wayne Association: Homecoming and Revival, Jul. 24-27; Sun., 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., with dinner on the grounds; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Robby Johnson, preaching; Marty

Haggard (son of Merle Haggard), music; Chris Layton, pastor.

First Church, Lauderdale: Revival, Jul. 31-Aug. 3; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ed Falgout, evangelist; John Yates, music; Jerry Bishop, pastor.

Friendship Church, Brookhaven: Revival, Jul. 24-28; Sun., 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Gene Douglas, evangelist; Stacy Smith, music; Chad Yarborough, pastor.

Grace Church, Calhoun City: Homecoming and Revival, Jul. 24-29; Sun., 10:30 a.m. with special singing and John Stewart preaching, followed by potluck lunch; 1:30 p.m. special singing, testimonies, and Buford Usry, speaking; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Carl Morris, pastor.

Hickory Church, Hickory: Youth Revival, Aug. 1-3; 7 p.m.; Scott Vaughn, speaker; Chris Layton, music.

Juniper Grove Church, Poplarville: Homecoming and 150th anniversary, Aug. 13-14; church will furnish food Saturday; regular potluck meal Sunday; John Sapp, pastor.

Jupiter Church, Simpson Association: Revival, Jul. 24-29; Sun., 10:45 a.m. followed by lunch, and 1 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m. Earl Clark, Morton, preaching; Bruce Jolly, pastor.

Ludlow Church, Ludlow: Revival, Jul. 24-29; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; singing, 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Leon Everett, speaker; Jeffery Jones, music; Sylvia Graves, pianist; M. L. Wallace, pastor.

Mount Olive Church, Smithdale: Revival, Jul. 24-27; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Joey Barnard, pastor, preaching Sun. morning; Jimmy Porter, guest preacher; Doug Carrol, music.

Mt. Pisgah Church, Rankin Association: Revival, Jul. 24-27; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tim Smith and Chip Price, speaking; Jan Jones, music; H. Frank Smith, interim pastor.

New Hope Church, Sumrall: Revival, Jul. 24-29; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 1:15 p.m. service; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Ken Roberts, Bassfield,

evangelist; Phillip Butler, music; Charles Broome, pastor.

Springfield Church, Natchez: Homecoming, Jul. 31, 11 a.m.-until; Phillip Marshall, Philadelphia, speaking. Marvin Cobb, pastor.

Topisaw Church, Brookhaven: Revival, Jul. 24-28; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7:30 p.m.; Luther Price, central South Carolina, speaker; Joe Moree, music; David Moree, pastor.

Union Church, Beaumont: Homecoming and Revival, Jul. 24-27; Sun., song service, 10:30 a.m. and worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish luncheon; singing, 1 p.m., featuring the Martin family, Mauriceville, Tex., and The Calvary Singers, Arlington, Tex.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jerry Oliver, Arlington, Tex., preaching; Wayne Walley, pastor.

Wayside Church, Vicksburg: Revival, Jul. 24-27; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Justin Peters, evangelist; Lanny and Mark McCann, music; Darrell White, pastor.

Weir Church, Weir: Revival, Jul. 24-27; Sun., 11 a.m., lunch,

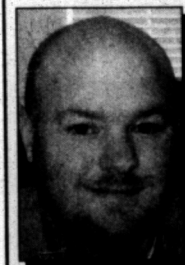
and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bill Dowdy, Ecu, evangelist; Diane Atkinson, music; Jim Pender, pastor.

West Church, West: Homecoming, Aug. 7; 11 a.m., followed by fellowship luncheon; Jim Futral, speaking; music by local church members.

Whitesand Church, Prentiss: Revival, Jul. 24-27; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Joel Eavenson, Pinola, preaching; Rick Holifield, music; Charles R. Burnham, pastor.

STAFF CHANGES

Bradley Rushing has been called as pastor to First, Cleveland, effective May 22. He and his wife Misty have a 9-month-old son, Noah.



Thorne

Mantee, Mantee, has called **David Thorne** as Minister of Music and Youth.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

June 13 - June 30

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Mr. Seth Farmer
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Doug & Marilyn Hutto
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Back to School Needs:

- Yearbook Money — \$30 Jr. High, \$50 Sr. High
- School Pictures (\$20)
- ACT Test Fees (\$28)
- 1/2 in. up to 1 1/2 in. binders w/ pockets
- Dividers w/ pockets
- Pocket folders w/ brads
- Index Cards, 3x5 and 4x6
- Elmer's Glue Pens
- Manila Drawing paper, 12x18
- Washable Markers
- Highlighters (4-color pk)
- Water Colors
- Crayola Colored Pencils
- Large Scissors
- Hand Sanitizer
- Liquid Soap
- Poster Board
- Science Fair Boards
- Wet Ones
- Clorox Wipes
- 409 Spray
- Large Backpacks
- Texas Instruments
TI-83 Calculators
- Plain White T-shirts (Adults sizes)

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Mrs. Allyne Statham
Mrs. Juanita Herrington
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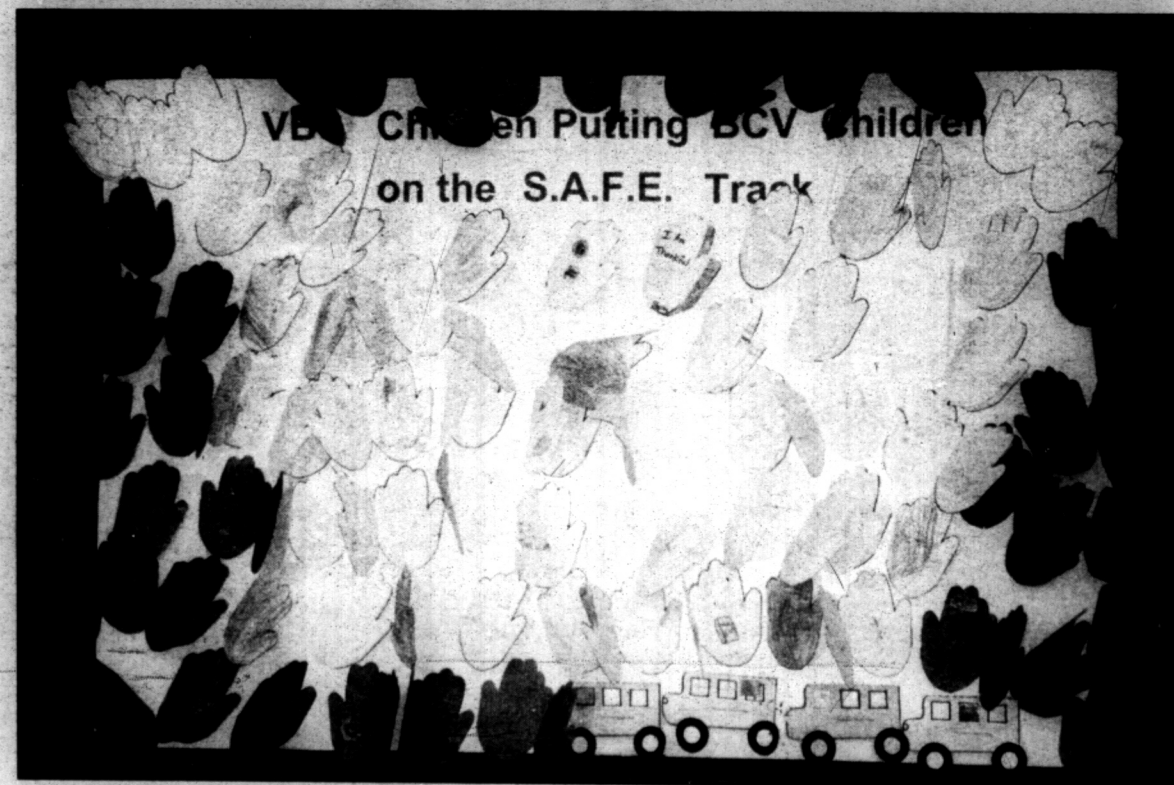
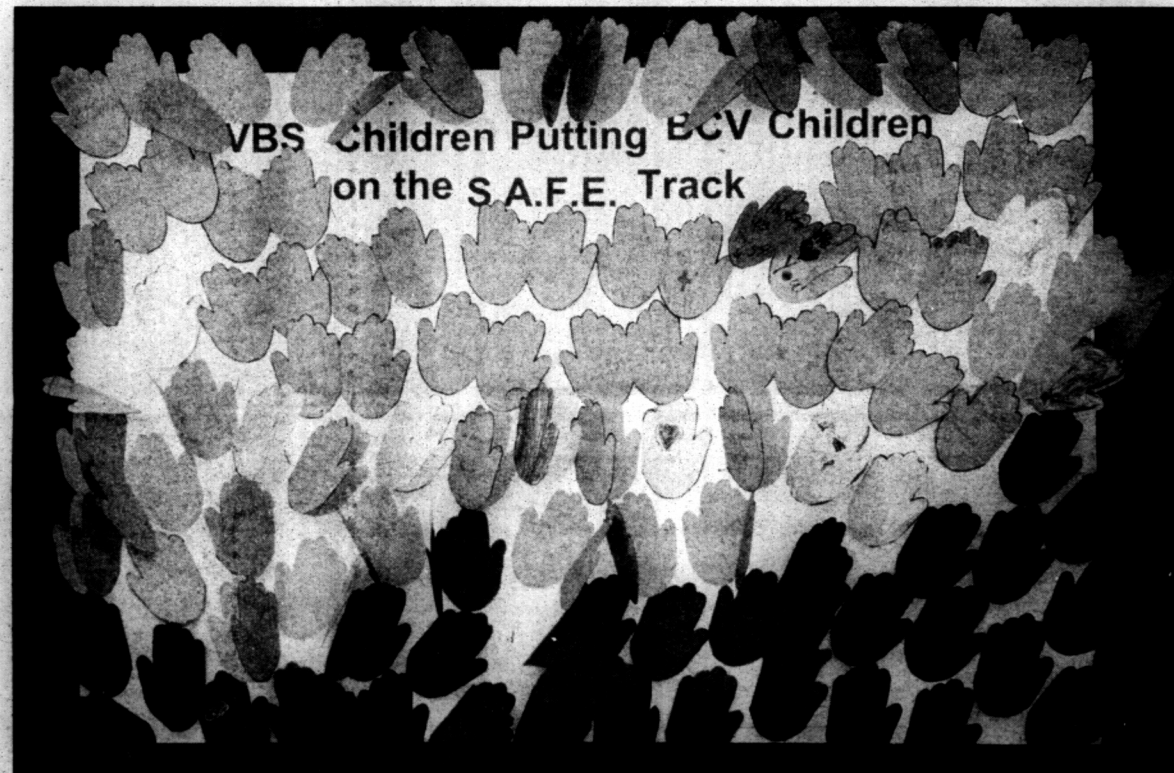
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Lessie Mae Barlow
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Children from around the state are learning about The Baptist Children's Village ministry through Vacation Bible School this summer. Pictured are some of the prayers and words of encouragement these children sent to the residents of The BCV.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Discerning Truth

Colossians 2:6-19

Two thousand years after Christ's earthly life, we still must distinguish sound Christian teaching from error. Just recently, I've heard a radio teacher explaining why baptism is necessary for salvation and had what I believed to be a heretical tract thrust into my hands. When Christians encounter such teachings today, we can turn to the Word of God to discern truth. Imagine the problem, though, for the early Christians to whom Paul wrote Colossians. They had Hebrew Scriptures, but the New Testament we rely on today was still being written. Oral teaching from the Lord's apostles competed with teachings from others of less reliable Christian authority or experience.

Paul wrote to the Christians at Colosse in such a situation. The nature of the problem must be deduced, but it probably

involved two false teachings that disturbed the harmony of the early church: the teachings of the Judaizers, who accepted Jesus as Christ but demanded that Christians also observe the rituals of the Jewish faith in order to be saved; the teachings of the Gnostics, who basically accepted dualism, a view that what is spiritual is good and that what is physical is bad. This belief, obviously, is inconsistent with a belief in the full humanity and deity of Christ. Some Gnostics embraced asceticism, trying to beat down every desire of the physical body; others did whatever they wanted in their bodies, believing that physical behaviors didn't matter at all.

Build on the Foundation (2:6-7) — Christians have accepted the truth of Christ and joined



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their lives with His. Just as a strong building can withstand a storm, a strong Christian is so attached to the truth of Christ that he or she is less vulnerable to false teaching. Paul used several figures of speech here to describe such a Christian. Christians are rooted (like a tree or plant) in the richness of Christ Jesus the Lord, the name Paul used to emphasize the full humanity, deity, and authority of Christ. In a continual process, we also are being built up in Him, like a sound building on a firm foundation. We are also to "walk," or conduct our daily lives by and in faith.

Living and learning according to sound teaching, we will overflow with thanksgiving. This thanksgiving demonstrates the effects of what God has done for us in Christ. This cannot be said of the effects of false teaching.

Be Careful (2:8-15) — What a person believes usually determines what that person does. Some teachings actually enslave

or destroy those who believe them. Here Paul spoke against a particular philosophy, not against philosophy in general, as the original language makes clear. This philosophy was empty of value, based on human tradition, not the truth of Christ.

In Jesus Christ, human and divine, God's full nature "dwells bodily." Not only that, but Christians have been filled by Christ, who is above every "ruler and authority." So, by implication, Christians have no spiritual need to perform the extra ritualistic requirements some false teachings would require (Judaizers, circumcision). Christians have been spiritually circumcised, baptized, and raised from the dead through faith in the "working of God" in Christ. Christ's complete work includes the forgiveness of our sins and the complete canceling of our debt of sin. A salvation so complete needs no human addition. The standard for spiritual truth is Christ.

Let No One Disqualify You (2:16-19) — One reason we as Christians cannot be disqualified from salvation is that we

were never qualified to begin with. The qualification is all Christ's. So anyone who teaches that we must eat or not eat certain things, practice extreme denial of our bodily needs, or follow certain ritualistic traditions to be right with God is teaching us to try to qualify what Christ has already accepted. Someone who teaches that we should worship angels or recognize his or her "superior knowledge" of a "visionary realm" is puffed up, "inflated without cause by his fleshly mind." Such persons rely on ideas of their own creation rather than on connection to our head, Jesus Christ, who nourishes and holds together all the body of Christ. This Christian certainty has never and will never change. Today, as two thousand years ago, we can discern spiritual truth (another in this unit's principles of victorious Christian living) by looking to Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Rhoda Royce is a member of First Church, Clinton.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

How to Live in a Threatening World

Ezekiel 38:14-23; 39:27-29

Those who are especially interested in apocalyptic events as found in Revelation and Daniel, should also give careful consideration to the latter chapters of Ezekiel. While some of the details differ and describe different end time events, the outcome is the same — God wins! Those who are on the Lord's side are winners; those who oppose the Lord lose, and lose utterly.

1. Threats Are Real (Ezek. 38:14-16a)

In chapter 38, Ezekiel is told to prophesy regarding Gog, a leader who will amass a coalition against Israel to acquire her spoils. The land itself is a treasure to many people around the world. Of course, the Jews regard it as their promised land from God. Moslems regard the Dome on the Rock as one of their most

sacred sites. Considering the number of attacks Israel has already endured in her relatively short modern existence, it isn't hard to see that a threat of an invasion in the land is real.

Threats are not only something reserved for the distant future. We have threats today, both politically and spiritually. Attacks occur against Christianity and Christians personally everyday. Attempts are made even in this country to limit our freedom of worship. Satan and those who love his darkness are launching their "fiery darts" (Ephesians 6:16).

Therefore, the Word of the Lord forewarns us to "put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11). We are in a battleground, not a playground,



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and only the whole armor will enable us to stand against the wicked forces that seek to attack.

2. God is Prepared (38:16b)

The invasion of Israel from her north will not be a surprise to God. As a matter of fact, this invasion has been foretold by God since 2,500 years ago! It will surely happen, and God is prepared to handle it, whether it is tomorrow or a thousand years from tomorrow. He has already declared the outcome, and "it ain't a pretty picture" for the enemies of God.

Neither has the Lord left His Church unprepared. He has equipped us, with His power, His promises, and His Word. When we become believers in Jesus Christ, we are not left here to live defeated lives; we are left to overcome the world by faith (1 John 5:4) and with good (Romans 12:21). Regardless of the threat, when God's people pray, God is prepared to respond.

3. Trust God to Handle Threats (38:17-23)

God declared through Ezekiel that He Himself will defend the nation, and He will be glorified. The rest of the world would know that the Lord handled this threat, not the defense system of the people.

Insurance forms sometimes refer to earthquakes, hail, and fire from the sky as "acts of God." While He usually does allow events of His creation to occur in their courses, these events against the army of Gog will be supernatural. There will be no doubt that God has intervened.

Our Lord doesn't have to save all His strength for the end times. He has shown that He is able to handle the threats of a hostile world yesterday and today as well as tomorrow. Trust His strength. Remember that "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

4. Fulfill the Lord's Purposes (39:27-29)

Ezekiel prophesied that God would once again bring the people of Israel back to the land

and would no longer turn away from them. Similarly, in chapter 37, God declared those dry bones, representing His nation of Israel, would once again live.

How remarkable it is today that the nation of Israel exists! But we Christians should not be surprised. Rather we should rejoice because we have the historical opportunity to see the Lord fulfill His purposes regarding that nation.

As events unfold around us every day, we should become even more committed to allowing the Lord to fulfill His purposes in each of our lives. We are winners, and we need to live victoriously. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded; that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37-39).

Schuman is pastor of Hamilton Church, Ashland.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

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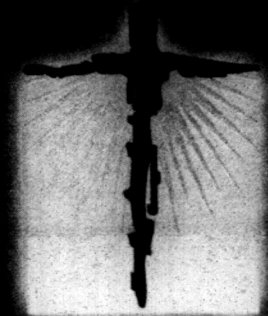
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